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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific during the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to promote dialogue and confidence-building in the region and beyond by organizing the fifteenth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, held on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, and the twenty-sixth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, held in Nagasaki, Japan, which were held in November and December 2016, respectively. The Conferences served as important forums to address key challenges posed to the international non-proliferation regimes regarding weapons of mass destruction. Participants focused on the nexus between the security of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials and cybersecurity, and discussed specific measures that would make the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons more efficient.

The Centre promoted the universalization and implementation of multilateral non-proliferation and arms control instruments, providing capacity-building programmes for Member States upon their request. In this regard, the Centre organized subregional and national workshops for South-East Asian and Pacific islands States to enhance their capacity to control small arms and light weapons and other conventional arms, and to enable States to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Arms Trade Treaty. In addition, the Centre undertook a project with the Government of the Philippines to provide technical and legal

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assistance to strengthen control of small arms. Since July 2016 and in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Centre has been engaged in a joint project to promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Central Asian States and Mongolia.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/65, the Centre relocated from Bangkok to Kathmandu, and resumed its operations from Nepal as of 6 February 2017.

The Regional Centre depends solely upon voluntary financial contributions to implement its programme activities. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to Member States, in particular the host country, Nepal, and other partners that have provided support for the Centre's operations and programmes with financial and in-kind assistance. He also wishes to thank Thailand for its support for the Centre's temporary operation from Bangkok. The Secretary-General calls upon countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by Member States in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament through the appropriate utilization of available resources. The Regional Centre facilitates and coordinates the implementation of regional activities of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in Asia and the Pacific.

2. In its resolution 71/78, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction at the activities carried out in the past year by the Regional Centre and reaffirmed its strong support for the role of the Centre in the promotion of activities of the United Nations at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security among the Member States in Asia and the Pacific. It also expressed its gratitude to the Government of the host country, Nepal, for its cooperation and financial support. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to the above-mentioned request and covers the activities of the Regional Centre during the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Regional Centre for the first year of the biennium 2016-2017 is contained in the annex to the present report.

II. Activities of the Regional Centre

4. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre focused its programmatic activities on the following areas: promoting the implementation of global disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control instruments, including by providing capacity-building and technical and legal assistance to Member States in the region, upon their request; enhancing dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security; and undertaking outreach and advocacy initiatives.

A. Promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments

5. The Regional Centre organized a Pacific regional capacity-building workshop in Apia, from 13 to 15 September 2016, to foster dialogue towards enhancing regional and national capacities to meet the requirements of the Arms Trade Treaty. Hosted by the Government of Samoa, the event brought together representatives from 10 Pacific island States with international arms control experts from governments, civil society and academia to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Treaty. Participants exchanged experiences in the preparation for ratification and implementation of the Treaty and identified needs for assistance and opportunities for cooperation. Supplementing the workshop was a special session on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, as well as a practical exercise on compiling national reports regarding the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. The workshop was funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand.

6. In cooperation with the Government of Cambodia, the Regional Centre organized a two-day national capacity-building workshop on control of small arms and light weapons, in Phnom Penh, on 7 and 8 December 2016. The event brought together more than 20 government officials and experts from relevant ministries and agencies, as well as international and United Nations experts, to discuss key international agreements, in particular the Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty. The workshop focused on concrete measures to strengthen national control of such weapons, particularly the technical aspects, a national coordinating mechanism and a national action plan related to such control. The workshop was funded by the Government of Germany.

7. At the request of the Government of the Philippines, the Regional Centre provided technical and legal assistance to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action, and to help build capacity towards ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty, through a three-month project that lasted from January to March 2017. As part of the project, international technical and legal experts, together with representatives from the Centre, conducted an initial visit to Manila, where they assessed and identified needs for assistance in consultation with Government officials and by conducting on-site visits. The experts subsequently prepared review reports with practical recommendations on strengthening relevant laws, regulations, rules and administrative instructions, as well as technical operating procedures and practices for the effective control of small arms and light weapons in accordance with international standards. The recommendations where presented to and discussed with Government officials at a final summary visit in March 2017. The project was funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

8. In order to build the capacity of South-East Asian States to implement the Programme of Action, the Regional Centre organized a training hosted by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in Vientiane, in June 2017. Participants from eight States of the region and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Association of Chiefs of Police presented and discussed practical issues of the implementation of the Programme at the national level and the utilization of the International Small Arms Control Standards. In their presentations, the representatives of the Centre and of the Office for Disarmament Affairs paid special attention to the synergies between implementing the Programme of Action and reporting thereon in the framework of the Programme, on the one hand, and monitoring progress towards targets 16.1 and 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on the other. Two practical exercises on designing a national action plan and preparing online national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action constituted the central part of the event and served to build the capacity of national representatives in the use of the International Small Arms Control Standards assessment tool and the preparation of the report. The project was funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

9. The Regional Centre organized a round-table discussion in Kathmandu, in November 2016, to promote the regional implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The event, hosted by the Government of Nepal, brought together representatives from 15 Member States, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The meeting focused on the 2016 comprehensive review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) (see S/2016/1038), its synergies with other disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, particularly the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention), and the role of regional cooperation in its implementation. The event also marked the relaunch

of the Kathmandu process, a dialogue to promote disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation in Asia and the Pacific and to build confidence and foster understanding of those issues.

10. In cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the group of experts appointed to assist the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the Regional Centre launched a joint project, in July 2016, in support of regional implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The project aims to advance the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in Central Asia and Mongolia through facilitating country-specific dialogues, developing and implementing national action plans, enhancing States' reporting to the Committee, sharing effective national practices and broadening collaboration among international and regional actors. It includes several project activities designed to improve national implementation of the resolution, as follows: (a) national inter-agency round-table discussions to assess the status of implementation and assist in developing national action plans; (b) expert review meetings to evaluate the progress in executing national action plans; and (c) peer-review meetings to share experiences and effective practices among States on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

11. In the framework of the joint project, the Regional Centre organized three country-specific dialogues in the form of national round-table meetings to promote the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The events were held in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia, in September 2016, December 2016 and May 2017, respectively. The events brought together officials of relevant State agencies of the respective Governments to review the progress achieved and outline a road map to further update and develop national action plans. New measures proposed during the meetings include the enhancement of national legislation, the adoption of national control lists, the strengthening and enforcement of domestic control mechanisms and the provision of training and educational activities related to ensuring the safety and security of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials.

12. As a follow-up to the national round-table meetings, in the framework of the joint project, the Regional Centre organized two expert review events, for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, to assess the progress in the development and implementation of their national action plans, which were held in Vienna, in March and May 2017, respectively. At those events, the States reported on the status of national action plans and received recommendations from international experts, with special attention paid to challenges encountered and lessons learned from the plans' implementation. The national round-table and expert review meetings resulted in draft updates by Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan of their national action plans, and a draft framework and structured outline for the Mongolian national action plan.

13. Still in the framework of the joint project, a peer review on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) was held in Minsk in August 2016. It was the first such peer review in a trilateral format. Officials representing Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, alongside OSCE representatives, the group of experts appointed to assist the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Regional Centre, exchanged experiences, developed practical recommendations and prepared documents that included legislative, practical and technical elements relating to resolution 1540 (2004), in order to support the national action plans of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The participating experts discussed and shared national approaches to the implementation of the resolution, including export-control legislation and border controls with a specific focus on biological and chemical security. The meeting included two site visits related to the detection of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials. The participants agreed on a set of

recommendations to improve the national action plans of those two Central Asian States.

B. Promoting dialogue and confidence in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security

14. The Regional Centre organized two annual international conferences on disarmament, non-proliferation and security issues, in collaboration with the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea. The conferences served as important forums for engaging Member States, intergovernmental organizations, academia, civil society and other stakeholders in informal and frank discussions on key challenges in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, contributing to security and confidence-building and to the efforts to seek solutions to complex issues in such matters both globally and in the Asia-Pacific region.

15. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Centre organized the fifteenth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, held on Jeju Island on 17 and 18 November 2016. Some 40 representatives from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, policy institutes and academia participated in the Conference. The agenda addressed the nuclear challenges on the Korean Peninsula, particularly the implementation of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016), the impact and effectiveness of the sanctions regime and how to move forward. The Conference also focused on the nexus between the security of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials and cybersecurity, specifically on the form and extent of cyberthreats to relevant facilities and on ways to counter such threats. In addition, participants debated the nature of, and challenges and ideas for, further improvements in relation to the key export control regimes for nuclear, biological, chemical and missile weapons.

16. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and with the support of the Prefecture and City of Nagasaki, the Centre organized the twenty-sixth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, on the theme "Towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons", in Nagasaki, on 12 and 13 December 2016. Over 60 representatives took part in the Conference and discussed specific measures that would make the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons more effective. These included such regional security issues as encouraging direct dialogue among the States concerned on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction, and engaging with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cap its nuclear weapons programme and reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Participants advocated deeper nuclear reductions and de-alerting weapons from prompt-launch status and argued for preventing further modernization of nuclear arsenals, banning nuclear tests and fostering the role of civil society in promoting nuclear disarmament. The Centre organized or participated in several side events on the margin of the Conference, including the forum of Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons and the "United Nations Posters for Peace" exhibition.

C. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

17. The Regional Centre continued its efforts to enhance partnerships with major stakeholders in the region, including Member States, subregional organizations, other United Nations entities and civil society, through its concerted communications and outreach activities and through joint initiatives and

collaborative projects. In this context, the Centre, inter alia, strengthened its partnerships with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, the European Union, OSCE, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Pacific Islands Forum, through the exchange of information, invitations to each other's events and work on joint projects.

18. The Regional Centre participated in and, on behalf of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, contributed a presentation to the deliberations of the Working Group of the Executive Committee of the Commission for the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. The event was held in July 2016, in Vientiane, and focused on amendments to the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and on facilitating the signing of the Protocol by the nuclear-weapon States.

19. The Regional Centre also participated in and contributed to the first edition of the Women Higher Education for Peace Vienna Forum, organized by the Vienna office of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in July 2016. Part of the broader Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education Partnership initiative, the Forum brought together professionals from relevant international organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and think tanks.

20. Furthermore, the Centre contributed to a regional consultative meeting on preventing arms diversion, organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, held in Bangkok, in March 2017. The event focused on discussing regional understandings and options to enhance cooperation and strengthen end use and end user control systems.

21. In addition, the Centre participated in and contributed to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime expert group meeting on education for justice, held in Vienna, in March 2017, to develop recommendations for university courses on preventing the illicit trafficking of firearms and armed violence and establishing and maintaining gun-free zones.

22. Lastly, the Regional Centre, in partnership with OSCE and the group of experts appointed to assist the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), contributed to the organization of a training session for national points of contact from Central Asian participating States of OSCE on implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), held in Kaliningrad, Russian Federation, in June and July 2016.

D. Resumption of operation from Nepal

23. As a result of the strong earthquakes in Nepal, in April and May 2015, the Centre had temporarily relocated to Bangkok, in order to be able to continue its services and programmes. During the reporting period, and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/65, the Regional Centre was heavily engaged in preparing for relocating to and resuming its operations from Kathmandu. The activities were conducted in close cooperation with the Government of Nepal and the United Nations Development Programme in Nepal, and included identifying a seismically safe building for the Centre's office, completing refurbishment thereof and the installation of office equipment. In November 2016, the Regional Centre organized an inauguration event in Kathmandu, with the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. On 6 February 2017, the Centre relocated to Kathmandu and resumed its operation from Nepal. The Secretary-General wishes to thank the Government of Thailand for temporarily hosting the Regional Centre in Bangkok, and the Government of Nepal

for the cooperation and support, including financial support, for the relocation of the Centre back to Kathmandu.

E. Future activities

24. The Regional Centre will continue to assist Member States in the region upon their request, with a focus on practical assistance and capacity-building in order to contribute to national and regional efforts towards arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to promote dialogue and confidence-building and peace and disarmament education in the region. The Centre will remain seized with the task of contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by assisting Member States in the region in their efforts to reduce illicit arms flows, reduce gun violence and ensure women's participation in combating the illicit trade of small arms.

III. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

25. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2016, voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Centre were received in the amount of $484,005. Information on the status of the Trust Fund for 2016 is contained in the annex to the present report.

26. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to Governments that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre: Australia, China, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Thailand. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Nepal for its long-standing financial and political support provided in its capacity as host country to the Regional Centre.

27. The Secretary-General continues to encourage financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre from Asian and Pacific States as a clear indication of the value that Member States attribute to the Centre's expertise and technical assistance.

28. The Secretary-General wishes to thank all Member States and partners for their generous contributions to and support for the Regional Centre and encourages their continuous support to ensure that the Centre can continue to provide technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the region, at their request, in fulfilment of its mandate.

B. Staffing

29. The regular budget of the United Nations funds the posts of one Senior Political Affairs Officer/Director of the Centre (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and one General Service staff member (G-7, Local level).

30. The host country, Nepal, through its annual contribution, funded two additional local staff. The Secretary-General thanks the Government of Switzerland for the funding of one Associate Expert and the Government of Japan for the funding of one United Nations Volunteer.

IV. Conclusion

31. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre engaged in and provided assistance for a number of disarmament initiatives in Asia and the Pacific. Working with Member States and other stakeholders, it continued to fulfil its mandate to provide support, upon request, to Member States. The annual conferences held in Japan and the Republic of Korea continue to provide important forums for promoting dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security.

32. The Centre also engaged in outreach and advocacy activities. Its efforts to strengthen the capacity of States in the region to control conventional arms and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors continue to be highly relevant. The Centre plans to expand the scope of its activities to include peace and disarmament education, as well as activities on the full and effective inclusion of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, as part of the efforts of the United Nations to further promote peace, security and disarmament in the region and the world.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for 2016

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2016	**945 995**
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions	484 005[a]
Investment revenue	7 606
Total revenue and prior year adjustment	**491 611**
Expenses	
Operating expenses	437 151
Refunds to donors	38 070[b]
Total expenses	**475 221**
Surplus/(deficit)	16 390
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)	**962 385**

[a] Consists of voluntary contributions from donors as follows: Australia, $102,975; China, $150,000; Kazakhstan, $10,000; Nepal, $111,685; New Zealand, $64,645; Republic of Korea, $41,700; Thailand, $3,000.

[b] Consists of refunds to Germany, $23,466; Switzerland, $12,436; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, $2,168.